

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PGOV, ETEL, WB, GE, GW

SUBJECT: INTRA-BERLIN TELEPHONE COMMUNICATIONS

1. SENATOR FOR FEDERAL AFFAIRS DIETRICH STOBBE HAS PUBLICLY WARNED GDR THAT UNLESS IT MEETS ITS OBLIGATION TO PROVIDE FOR FULLY AUTOMATIC TELEPHONE SERVICE WITH WEST BERLIN AS FORMALLY AGREED IN 1971, IT WILL LOSE INTERNATIONAL CREDIBILITY AND WILL BE VIOLATING PROVISIONS OF THE QA. STOBBE WAS COMMENTING ON PERSISTENT REPORTS FROM EAST GERMAN PTT SOURCES TO EFFECT THAT DESPITE GDR COMMITMENT IN FRG-GDR PTT AGREEMENT OF SEPTEMBER 30, 1971 TO HAVE DIRECT-DIAL CAPABILITY WITH WEST BERLIN BY END OF 1974, GDR WILL BE UNABLE PUT SUCH SYSTEM INTO OPERATION IN TIME TO MEET DEADLINE.

2. SENAT OFFICIAL GERHARD JUNZE INFORMED MISOFF NOVEMBER 25 THAT SENAT IS DETERMINED NOT TO LET EAST GERMANS OFF THE HOOK. IN ADDITION, HUNZE SAID THAT FRG PTT OFFICIALS WHO HAVE BEEN MEETING PERIODICALLY WITH GDR PTT OFFICIALS FOR PAST SEVERAL MONTHS HAVE ALSO PRESSED HARD FOR EAST GERMAN COMPLIANCE WITH PTT

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AGREEMENT. IT IS BELIEVED THAT PRESENT EAST GERMAN

SYSTEM IS NOT COMPATIBLE WITH WEST BERLIN SYSTEM FOR FULLY AUTOMATIC SERVICE. BUT IT NOT CERTAIN THAT REAL REASONS FOR GDR INABILITY LINK EAST AND WEST BERLIN TELEPHONES BY DECEMBER 31 ARE TECHNICAL, AS CLAIMED, OR POLITICAL. IN LATTER CASE, IT COULD BE THAT GDR WANTS TO EXACT SOME FURTHER PRICE FROM SENAT AND/OR FRG FOR DOING WHAT IT HAS ALREADY AGREED TO DO, OR, AS SENATOR STOBBE PRIVATELY TOLD DEPUTY COMMANDANTS NOV. 26, IT WISHES TO LIMIT CONTACTS IN FURTHERANCE OF ABGRENZUNG POLICY.

3. CDU MEMBERS OF BERLIN HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES PLAN TO USE ISSUE IN BERLIN ELECTION CAMPAIGN. CDU FLOOR LEADER LUMMER SAID IN PUBLIC STATEMENT NOV 25 THAT FRG SHOULD REDUCE ITS PAYMENTS TO GDR UNLESS SERVICE IS CREATED BY END OF 1974, AND THAT, IN CASE THIS IS NOT DONE, SIGNATORY POWERS OF QA SHOULD MEET TO DISCUSS PROBLEM.

4. COMMENT: PRESENT SITUATION IS IMPROVEMENT OVER PRE-QA DAYS WHEN TELEPHONE CALLS BETWEEN EAST AND WEST BERLIN WERE VIRTUALLY IMPOSSIBLE. TODAY, PRIVATE CALLERS WITH PATIENCE TO WAIT MANY HOURS CAN EVENTUALLY SPEAK TO RELATIVES IN EAST. THIS SITUATION IS NEVERTHELESS FAR FROM TOLERABLE WHEN ONE CONSIDERS WIDESPREAD BELIEF THAT AUTOMATIC TELEPHONE SERVICE WOULD BE A FACT OF LIFE IN 1974, AND MUCH GREATER EASE WITH WHICH FRG RESIDENTS CAN CALL EAST GERMANY THAN BERLINERS CAN CALL ACROSS WALL. SELIGMANN

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